

COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT;

A Monthly Paper, for the Improvement of Common School Education.

Vol. I.

ALBANY, MARCH, 1836.

No. 3.

Edited by J. Orville Taylor.

THE TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION ARE
Fifty cents per annum, for a single copy.
For six copies to one direction, \$2.
For twenty copies to one direction, \$5.

Subscriptions always to be paid in advance.

Communications and subscriptions, POST-PAID,
may be addressed to the Editor.

Published at the Cultivator's office, No. 67
State-Street, Albany.

From the well-known character and abilities
of the Editor of this Paper, and the vital impor-
tance of the cause it advocates, we hope that
every citizen will consider it his duty to aid in
giving the "Common School Assistant," a cir-
culation in every family and School in the Union.

William L. Marcy, J. M. Matthews,
W. A. Duer, Benj. T. Onderdonk,
N. Bangs, S. Van Rensselaer,
James G. King, Gideon Hawley,
A. Spencer, John Savage,
Albert H. Tracy, Sam. Ward,
B. T. Welch, R. Hyde Walworth,
J. Buel.

COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT.

TO THE FRIENDS OF EDUCATION.

OUR OBJECTS.

This cheap paper has been established for
the exclusive purpose of improving our com-
mon schools. The paper will take no part
in sectarianism or politics, but the leading
objects of it shall be to show the influence
and importance of our common schools—to
interest the leading, prominent men in their
improvement—to make known and excite to
proper action, the indifference and apathy of
parents—to show the want and necessity of
well qualified teachers—to point out the de-
fects in the prevailing systems of instruc-
tion, and the evils from bad school govern-
ment—to suggest remedies for these defects
in teaching and government—to recommend
proper school books—to describe the wrong
structure and location of school-houses, and
to suggest plans for their improvement—to
prevail on trustees, inspectors and commis-
sioners of schools to be faithful in the per-
formance of their *whole duties*—and, in a
word, to urge, by all proper means, every
member of this commonwealth to give its
hearty co-operation with our common school
system.

AN EXPLANATION.

This paper can be sustained on its low
terms, only by an extensive circulation.—
Such a circulation can be given if some one
in every place will take a little pains to ask
his acquaintances to give their names to the
subscription. But what is every body's bu-
siness is nobody's, and many well disposed

are apt (supposing some one else will do it)
to neglect the performance of what they feel
to be a duty, both to their neighbors and
their country.

ON READING.—No. 1.

When children repeat the alphabet, and
begin to spell easy words, the teacher should
be careful that they preserve the common
colloquial tones of voice. In making their
first recitations, they are apt to raise the
voice to the highest pitch, or sink it to an
inaudible whisper. The conversational tone
is seldom employed. It is while learning to
spell that children first learn to read and
speak unnaturally. As soon as a book is
put into their hands, they think it necessary
(from their bad practice with the teacher)
either to raise or sink the voice.

It is at this stage of their studies that chil-
dren begin to acquire the habit of articula-
ting indistinctly; of precipitating syllable
after syllable, of putting all the letters of
the word into confusion. Now they begin
to draw or trail the letters, to abridge or
prolong the syllables; and to pitch the voice
on an unnatural key. If teachers are not
attentive to children when they first begin
to read, habits will be formed which will be
corrected with great difficulty, or remain
with the pupil through life. I would request
those who have not observed the fact, to
mark the unnatural manner in which almost
all young children read. Let teachers, then,
be careful that their pupils learn to spell and
read in an easy, *natural* manner.

Another cause of bad reading is, teachers
permit their scholars to read what they do
not understand. The style and the subject
of the reading lessons, which children are
made to practice on, are usually such that no
interest is felt in what is said, and the child
receives little or no meaning from the words
he is compelled to pronounce. This makes
the exercise a mere mechanical employment.
The scholar obtains no information from the
book, and hence never supposes it necessary
to communicate any to his hearers.

If the pupil only pronounces the words
with ease and rapidly, he gives the utmost
satisfaction to himself and his teacher;
the sentiment he makes no inquiry into.—
The practice of pronouncing words, for
months and years together, without fixing to
them any meaning whatever, produces the
very worst habit which children can possi-
bly acquire. The *words* and the *manner* in
which they deliver them, are all the children
ever have attended to, and, in all probability,
all they ever will attend to. Reading in this
way during their early years, contributes
greatly to the formation of that monotonous
mechanical delivery, so prevalent both in
public and private life.

Influence of Common School Teachers.

Few perceive the extent of the influence
of common school teachers. We hear much

of the influence of the press—of the influ-
ence of the clergy, and of the influence of
party spirit; but who talks of, or duly con-
siders the influence of our 80,000 common
school teachers. The character of the man,
to a great degree, is formed during the days
of childhood and youth, and these days are
passed with the common school teacher.—
Whatever he may be, he stamps himself up-
on his pupils—he is their criterion—their
model. Him they imitate, and to him they
look up for decisions. This the children do
when they are easily moulded into any shape
—when impressions are readily made and
firmly fixed, and while they are receiving
the principles which will govern their after
life. Children copy after the teacher—they
imitate his gait—his looks—his speech—his
manners—and they sympathize with his feel-
ings and adopt his opinions. The common
school teachers, in a great measure, give this
nation its education and character. But
who is watching this influence? Who is jeal-
ous of its nature? Who are endeavoring to
make it better? It is controlling more
mind, more of our destinies than the press.
Yet what, as a nation, are we doing to
enlighten and purify this influence? It is
known that M. DeFellenberg of the Hof-
wyl school, in Switzerland, determined to
devote his fortune and the labor of his life,
in the endeavor to effect the regeneration
of his native land, by means of education.—
"I will infuse good habits and principles
into the children," said he, "for in twenty
short years, these children will be men, giv-
ing the tone and the manners to the nation.
But here," he remarked, pointing to a num-
ber of young men, "is the great engine upon
which I rely for effecting the moral regene-
ration of my country; these are masters of
village schools, come here to imbibe my prin-
ciples, and to perfect themselves in their duty.
These men have six thousand pupils under
them; and if, by the blessing of God, I can
continue the direction of them, success is cer-
tain." This patriot of Switzerland relies on
his teachers for the regeneration of his coun-
try. He has judged correctly, for the com-
mon school teachers of a nation form its mind
and character. The five hundred thousand
children in this state, we grieve to say, are
not blessed with teachers from a Hofwyl,
nor with many of those who have received
instructions from a Fellenberg. What is
this "great engine" upon which Fellenberg
relied so much, doing in this country? What
might it not do if it was suitably
qualified and controlled?

Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, made Jan. 6, 1836.

We present a few extracts from this
interesting report, intending, however to re-
fer to it more fully in a future number.

"The whole number of organized counties
in the state is 55, and the number of towns
and wards 842. The annual reports of the
commissioners of common schools of all the

towns, and the reports of the clerks of all the counties, have been made as required by law.

There were on the last day of December, 1834, 10,132 organized school districts in the state, from 9,676 of which, annual reports have been made to the commissioners of common schools.

In all the districts from which reports have been received, schools have been kept during the year 1834, an average period of eight months.

The whole number of children over five and under sixteen years of age, residing on the last day of December, 1834, in the school districts, from which reports have been received, was 543,085, and the whole number of children who had attended school during the year 1834, in the same districts was 541,401—10,161 more than in 1833.

In this account neither the city of Albany nor the city of New-York is included.

The average number of children to each district in the state, is about 56.

The average number of organized school districts to each town, is twelve and a fraction.

The report says, it is reasonable to believe that in the common schools, private schools and academies, the number of children actually receiving instruction, is equal to the whole number between 5 and 16 years of age.

The amount of public money expended by the trustees in the year 1834, for the payment of the wages of teachers, was \$312,181 20; of which sum \$100,000 was received from the common school fund, \$193,560 28 was levied by taxation on the property of the inhabitants of the several towns and cities in the state; and \$13,620 92 was derived from the local funds belonging to particular towns.

The whole amount paid for teachers' wages in 1834, was \$732,059 89 excepting a few thousand dollars expended in the city of New-York for school-houses, by the public school society."

This report shows the excellency of our organized school system, and the faithfulness of the GENERAL supervision. We see that the common schools cost the state, including the pay on scholars, the taxes, and the income of the school fund, at least \$1,300,000 annually. Does the state get an adequate return for the expenditure of this large sum? Is not much of it lost by being squandered on incompetent teachers? Do not parents voluntarily deprive themselves of the beneficence of the state, by employing men to teach who are of little or no benefit to the schools? However wise the official counsel, or princely the school fund may be, the schools will not be worth much unless every parent, and teacher, and trustee, and school inspector, gives his hearty co-operation with the system. The character of the school rests principally with the inhabitants of each district. They can make it equal to our academies, or by neglecting it, pervert the school fund, and the spirit of the school act. Since 1827, there has been an annual distribution from the school fund of \$100,000; after this year there will be a distribution of \$110,000 annually.

NORMAL SCHOOLS IN PRUSSIA.

The normal school situated near the canal and the Berlin gate, is a large edifice two stories high, with a frontage of 127 feet, and considerable back-buildings, which, joined to the main building, form a square within which is a tolerably spacious court. The whole comprehends:

1. A family residence for the director or principal, and another for a master;
2. Three apartments for the unmarried masters;
3. An apartment for the steward and his servants, and sufficient convenience for household business and stowage;
4. A dining-room for the pupils, which serves also for the writing and drawing class;
5. An organ-room, in which the music lessons are given, the examinations take place, and the morning and evening prayers are said;
6. Two rooms for the scientific instruction of the pupils;
7. Four rooms for the classes of the annexed school;
8. Five rooms of different sizes, and two dormitories for the pupils;
9. Two infirmaries;
10. A wash-house;
11. Two cabinets of natural history;
12. Granaries, cellars, wood-houses, &c.

Expenses:

A normal school, (or teachers' seminary) receives annually from different state funds and from the students, 5,500 thaler or \$3,596.

This sum serves to pay—

1. The salaries of the masters;
2. Household expenses;
3. The materials for instruction for the normal school and the school annexed;
4. The garden ground;
5. The heating and lighting;
6. The repairs of the building, furniture and utensils, the insurance, taxes and expenses of the house, &c.;
7. The maintenance of pupils, the ten purses or exhibitions, and half-purses, and the sundries;
8. The physician and surgeon.

Apparatus.

The establishment contains the following articles:

1. Things required in the economy of the house, kitchen utensils, tables, forms, &c.;
2. Sufficient and suitable furniture, consisting of chests of drawers, tables, forms, chairs and boxes, for the class of the normal school, and the school for practice, and for the masters' rooms, &c. There is also for the poorer pupils, a certain number of bedsteads with bedding;
3. A considerable library for the masters and pupils, as well as a good collection of maps and globes for the teaching of geography;
4. A tolerably complete collection of philosophical instruments;
5. A collection of minerals, presented to the establishment by Councillor Von Turck;
6. A collection of stuffed birds, and other objects in natural history;
7. The instruments most required in mathematical instruction;
8. Complete drawing apparatus;

9. A very considerable collection of music;

10. A very good organ, a piano-forte, seven harpsicords, and many wind and string instruments.—*Cousin's Report.*

A REPORT.

Prussia, in 1833, had 42 normal schools, (or teachers' seminaries.) In the schools were 3,000 young men preparing themselves to teach the elementary schools of the country. France, in 1834, had established 30 normal schools. In this country, where education, if possible, is much more important, there are not more than ten or twelve of these seminaries. What is this country now doing for the education of her teachers? In the state of New-York only, has there been any legislative provision on this subject!

Report of a committee of the Regents of the University of the state of New-York, on the Education of Common School Teachers, made the 31st of January, 1835.

This able report is from the pen of the superintendent of common schools. It states at the commencement, that the great defect in our school system is the want of qualified teachers. To supply this defect it recommends eight departments, one in each senate district of the state, for the education of common school teachers: each department to be attached to some organized academy. At a subsequent meeting of the regents, the report was adopted, and the following academies were selected.

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 1st Dist. | Erasmus Hall, Kings co. |
| 2d do | Montgomery, Orange co. |
| 3d do | Kinderhook, Columbia co. |
| 4th do | St. Lawrence, St. Lawrence co. |
| 5th do | Fairfield, Herkimer co. |
| 6th do | Oxford, Chenango co. |
| 7th do | Canandaigua, Ontario co. |
| 8th do | Middlebury, Genesee co. |

The sum of 5,500 dollars is annually distributed to these departments, after having supplied them with a suitable library and apparatus. The students are expected to remain in these schools three years: they then receive a diploma, stating the course of studies they have pursued, and their qualifications to teach. The students are expected to leave the seminary four months in a year to teach a school, for the double purpose of obtaining funds, and putting in practice the principles they have been taught. The report presents a programme of studies to be pursued in these seminaries, and includes a list of the necessary maps and apparatus. It is an able, full view of the whole subject, and should be read by every citizen. That all might have that opportunity, the legislature last session, ordered the publication and distribution of two copies in every district in the state. The copies have been sent, and if not already distributed among the districts, may be obtained of the clerk of each county: each district should receive two copies, and we hope every district will feel eager to obtain and read this important document. It is highly instructive to teachers and parents, and school officers, and presents in a very forcible manner, the necessity of preparing and rewarding qualified teachers. Parents must be willing to pay

the young men who have prepared themselves to teach, an adequate compensation, or they will not secure their services. We should have given some extracts from this report, and have entered more fully into its plan, were it not for its general distribution through the state. The people will wish to read the whole. They cannot have a better school paper.

TO THE PUBLIC.

That this paper may not be included among the speculations of the day, we deem it our duty to say, that it has no other object than the best good of the whole people. It is published at its actual cost, and will contain nothing either in sentiment, or by way of recommendation, that has not first received the approval of several of the most responsible men in the state. When it speaks of books, it is for the benefit of the schools, and never for the benefit of either the author or the publishers. In books the public is not unfrequently grossly imposed upon, and there is a strong necessity for some judge in which the people may have entire confidence. We wish to do a good service to our fellow men; of our success the public will judge.

ON TEACHING WRITING.—No. 1.

It is to be regretted that our district schools furnish so small a number of good writers. But a very few who are now practicing this art in our district schools will be able to execute a free, bold, and legible hand. The greater part, including almost the whole will number their school days and still write with a stiff, measured, ragged, scrawling, blotting hand; scarcely legible to the writers themselves, and almost impossible for any one else to make out what is intended. The youth are conscious of their deficiencies with the pen, and we seldom find them willing to use it.

The little, imperfect as it is, that they have learned, is, from the want of practice, soon forgotten; and many, very many of the laboring classes, by the time they have numbered thirty or thirty-five years, are unable to write in any manner whatever. Others may write with some ease and finish while in school, and the copy before them, but as soon as the rule and plummet, the school desk and the round copy-plate is taken away, they have lost the art, and now find that they are unable to write a straight line or a legible one.

It is to be lamented that so much time is wasted in learning what they never do learn, or what, at best, they feel ashamed or unable to make any use of; or, with others, what is so soon forgotten. There is, generally speaking, a sufficient quantity of time appropriated to writing, sufficient care, (though fruitless,) taken to provide materials, (and a great quantity of them are used) to make all the scholars good writers.—There is some fault on the part of the teacher, or parent, or among the pupils themselves: and we will (from personal observa-

tion,) describe the process of learning to write in our district schools. The causes of so much imperfection may thus be developed.

The child is, (in most cases, for it is true that there are some exceptions to what I am about to say, I wish there were more,) provided with a single sheet of foolscap paper doubled into four leaves, a quill, and an inkstand, which probably has nothing in it but thick, muddy settlings, or dry, hard cotton, and thus duly equipped, sent to school. The thin small quantity of paper is laid upon the hard desk, made full of holes, ridges, and furrows by the former occupant's penknife.

The writing desk in many instances so high that the chin of the writer cannot, without a temporary elongation of body, be projected over the upper surface; this being done, however, and the feet left swinging six or eight inches from the floor, and half of the weight of the body hanging by the chin, the child with a horizontal view examines its copy of straight marks. It then is directed to take the pen, which is immediately spoiled by being thrust into the dry or muddy inkstand, and begin to write.

The pen is so held, that the feathered end, instead of being pointed towards the shoulder, is pointed in the opposite direction, directly in front: the fingers doubled in and squeezing the pen like a vice, the thumb thrown out straight and stiff, the forefinger enclosing the pen near the second joint, and the inked end of the pen passing over the first joint of the second finger in a perpendicular line to that made by the finger. In this tiresome, uneasy, unsteady attitude of body, and the hand holding the pen with a twisted, cramping gripe, the child completes its first lesson in the art of writing.

After such a beginning, the more the child writes the more confirmed will it become in its bad habits. It cannot improve; it is only forming habits which must be wholly discarded, if the child ever learns any thing. But in this wretched manner the pupil is permitted to use the pen day after day, for two, or four, or six years.

The teacher shows the scholar, perhaps, how to hold the pen, by placing it in his own hand correctly, but does not see that the pupil takes and keeps the pen in the same position when writing. If the pen should be held correctly for a moment, while the teacher is observing, the old habit will immediately change the position when the teacher has turned his back. Such practice and such instruction afford an explanation of so much waste of time and materials, of such slow improvement, and of so much bad penmanship.

Another pupil who commences writing at a more advanced age, finds the desk too low, and from being obliged to bend somewhat, soon lies down upon the paper. I have seldom entered a district school during the writing hour, without finding the scholars who were using the pen, resting their heads and shoulders on the desk, looking horizontally at their work, and the writing-book thrown half round, making its lines parallel with the axis of the eye. In this sleepy, hidden position, it is impossible to examine and criticize what they are doing: and yet, teachers from carelessness, or from having their

attention directed to some other part of the school during the writing season, almost universally allow it.

A modification of the School Act of N. York.

In his last report, the superintendent of common schools, makes the following suggestion: "It is worthy of the consideration of the legislature whether the sum required by law, to be levied on the towns, should not be once and a half the amount received from the common school fund." The report also states that "more than one-third of the towns already raise voluntarily, more than is required by law." It is probably known to all in the state, that the towns, heretofore, have been taxed a sum equal to that which they receive from the general fund. The alteration suggested is, that the towns raise once and a half this sum. The people, as the law now is, have the power at their town meetings, to raise twice as much as their share of the school fund, though the law does not compel them to raise more than an equal sum. Many of the towns have, however, taxed themselves as much as the law would permit them. Says the report "269 towns have raised a sum additional to that required law. In the county of Sullivan, every town has voted an additional sum, equal to the amount required by law to be raised, and in St. Lawrence county, every town but one." So that the proposed change in the law, would not compel one-third of the towns in the state to go any farther, and in many instances not as far, as they have gone voluntarily.

This suggestion, in our opinion, is a good one, and worthy of the general superintendent. The same change had for some time been meditated by the honorable Albert H. Tracy of Buffalo. This distinguished statesman has, consequently, brought forward a bill in the Senate, asking the legislature to require the towns to raise once and a half the sum they receive from the fund. It is to be hoped that the bill will pass both houses, and become a law. The more the people do for their schools, the more they will attend to them. Where we give our money, we give our attention, our sympathy and our supervision. If we give our school one dollar, it will do more good than for the state to give it ten dollars.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN FRANCE.

The report of the Minister of Public Instruction having lately been laid before the French Chambers we feel ourselves invited by this circumstance to make a few observations on the system of education now prevailing in France. This subject of popular education is completely a modern one. The obligation of a state to legislate for the instruction of the great body of the people may be considered a discovery of recent times; and when we consider that most nations grow up to their full proportions in great popular ignorance, and their prosperity depends not so much upon military (as in ancient times) as upon civil glory, it must be acknowledged to be one of admirable and philanthropic tendency.

In France, it becomes apparent at first glance that it requires the hand of authority

to impress some educational movement on the great mass; for ignorance, which often seems to be innocence till it is tried, and with which the really purest moral impressions, arising from agricultural influences, frequently abide, is, wherever political passions can penetrate, and wherever city manners prevail, the readiest and fittest organ for the expression of the most squalid, furious, and envenomed wickedness. France having experienced this truth more fatally than any other country, it is only natural that her government should be most anxious to educate universally—and indeed the declared anxiety of all her legislators on this subject is not so much to add to learning and science, and to develop intellectual resources, as to rescue the people from the dreadful state of demoralization into which they have fallen. Whether the system pursued for this purpose is likely to attain its object, is a question we shall not at present enter into.

We will now examine as briefly as we can, with the assistance of the report before us, the system of education at present in operation in France, and we shall place first in order *primary* or elementary instruction. This is undertaken altogether at the expense of the state, and contemplates chiefly the education of the populace. Its administration was formerly the duty of the Minister of Public Instruction, but it has been transferred lately to the separate communes, in imitation of the practice prevailing in Germany, the state nevertheless retaining its absolute control and superintendence. Every commune, according to the late laws, is obliged to have a school, but it does not appear that parents are compelled to send their children to it, as is the case in Germany. The report complains that the inhabitants of the rural districts do not appreciate the advantages of these establishments; that not only the laborious classes, but those more at their ease, manifest much reluctance to profit by them; and the author of the report can imagine no other way of overcoming this distaste for instruction than by educating sedulously the military force, that thus the soldiers, when they retire from the service, and return to their native places, may, by their superior knowledge, make the villagers ashamed of themselves. In spite, however, of all difficulties, school-houses have at last been erected in 23,196 communes, and there are at present only 3,991 communes without them. The report gives a very poor account of the efficiency of these establishments up to the present moment. As to the reluctance of the people to take advantage of them, this is a circumstance which we confess we cannot understand, except by supposing that the priesthood have been at their old work, setting their faces against whatever tends to enlightenment. We must add, that the new system of primary instruction has only been in operation five years.—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

An Extract from Gov. Marcy's last Message.

We have seen nothing on education so well said, or so suitable to the present time, as that part of Governor Marcy's last annual Message which relates to this important

subject. We make an extract that will be read with much interest, and if properly read, with a strong determination to give our school system more of our individual efforts.

"In a government like ours, which emanates from the people, where the entire administration in all its various branches is conducted for their benefit and subject to their constant supervision and control, and where the safety and the perpetuity of all its political institutions depend upon their virtue and intelligence, no other subject can be equal in importance to that of public instruction, and none should so earnestly engage the attention of the legislature. Ignorance, with all the moral evils of which it is the prolific source, brings with it also numerous political evils, dangerous to the welfare of the state. It should be the anxious care of the legislature to eradicate these evils by removing the causes of them. This can be done effectually only by diffusing instruction generally among the people. Although much remains here to be done in this respect, the past efforts of legislation upon the subject merit high commendation. Much has been already accomplished for the cause of popular education. A large fund has been dedicated to this object, and our common school system is established on right principles. But this is one of those subjects for which all cannot be done that is required, without a powerful co-operation on the part of the people in their individual capacity. The providing of funds for education, is an indispensable means for attaining the end; but it is not education. The wisest system that can be devised cannot be executed without human agency. The difficulty in the case arises, I fear, from the fact that the benefits of general education can only be fully appreciated by those who are educated themselves. Those parents who are so unfortunate as not to be properly educated, and those whose condition requires them to employ their time and their efforts to gain the means of subsistence, do not, in many instances sufficiently value the importance of education: Yet it is for their children, in common with all others, that the common school system is designed; and until its blessings are made to reach them, it will not be what it ought to be. If parents generally were sensible of the inestimable advantages they were procuring for their children by educating them, I am sure the efforts and contributions which are required to give full efficiency to our present system, would not be withheld. If I have rightly apprehended the indications of public opinion on this subject, a more auspicious season is approaching.

"At this time, a much larger number of individuals than heretofore, are exerting their energies and contributing their means to impress the public mind with the importance of making our system of popular instruction effective in diffusing its benefits to all the children in the state. I anticipate much good from the prevalence of the sentiment that the efforts of individuals must co-operate with the public authorities to ensure success to any system of general education."

A REASON.

Ignorance seldom desires knowledge. The very man who needs instruction most cares the least for it. He thinks all learning useless, for he can no more perceive its advantages than the blind man can the beauties of the rainbow. Just in proportion as a man's knowledge increases, his desire to know more increases; and the great difficulty lies in making a beginning—in persuading us to commence learning. Those who have been educated and can perceive the power, the happiness and the liberty there is in knowing, are sensible of the necessity and advantages of this paper; but there are a few who "care for none of these things."

The following is a letter which the editor had the honor to receive from a distinguished citizen of this state. He will do me the kindness to pardon its publicity.

To J. ORVILLE TAYLOR,
Editor of the Common School Assistant.

Dear Sir,—I have just received and read the first No. of your paper. I rejoice in your undertaking. Nothing I have seen has awakened so much hope in me that our common schools are speedily to undergo that great improvement which is indispensable to the preservation of our national Union, and of the great and priceless blessings bound up in it. The common school must be elevated and purified, or all that is most dear to the heart of the American patriot, philanthropist and christian, will perish.

I hope your paper will go to every family in the land. If its future numbers have the spirit and complexion of the first, they cannot fail of arousing the public mind to the miserable character, and to the necessary improvement—immediate improvement of the common school. Much has been published on this subject—much that is excellent. But it has not been published in a form to reach the great mass of the people. Your paper, like the cheap publications of the temperance society, will reach that mass. The temperance reformation has taught us the invaluable lesson, that in order to effect an important moral change, we must set the great body of the people to reading about it. And why is it that this change in the case of the temperance reformation has not been more rapid and thorough? Mainly owing to the defective system of common education; the great body of our people do not read much. You well say, "We should be taught not merely to pronounce words, but to read understandingly and with reflection."

Accompanying this letter is my check for one hundred dollars towards the support of your paper. Very respectfully yours,

Dec. 15, 1855.

We take the liberty of presenting another letter.

Medina, Feb. 15, 1856.

To J. ORVILLE TAYLOR:

My Dear Sir,—Enclosed, I send you five dollars. Please forward to me soon as you can, twenty copies of the Common School

Assistant. We are glad to see such a work; 'tis precisely the thing we want. It ought to be in the hands of every school teacher and parent in the United States. Our common schools are, as a whole, in a deplorable condition; and as you say, "something must be done, and that speedily." Go on, sir, in your philanthropic undertaking. Be not discouraged. Soon, if not at present, your labors will be appreciated and rewarded.

Yours obsequiously.

STUDY OF GRAMMAR—No. 1.

Grammar, as a science, treats of the natural connexion between words, and makes known the principles which are common to all languages. These principles, upon which the grammar of a language is founded, are not arbitrary or variable, but fixed and universal. They are formed from the natural, permanent phenomena of the language in the same way that the principles of natural philosophy are formed from the phenomena of nature. The author of a grammar collects the facts and phenomena of a language, and from them forms the principles which make the science of the language.

The grammarian sees in every language several classes of words; to each class he gives a name. For instance, words which represent things, or whatever we may form a notion of, he calls nouns. Another class he calls verbs, another adjectives; and finally he perceives in the English language and names, various classes of words. Their natural distinctions are always seen, and make what is called the parts of speech.

Again, these classes of words have various relations to each other, and are sometimes modified by what they represent.—These relations and modifications give rise to what grammarians call number, case, mood, tense, &c. Every individual has the same opportunity of observing these facts and phenomena in a language, that the individual had who wrote the grammar. The grammarian examined the language as it is, and has given us what he discovered. He has written out a science which is so obvious to all, and at the same time so simple, that all may learn it; and they may not only learn it, but they may make a practical use of it; for the whole object of the science is to enable every person to write and speak with ease, force, and correctness.

To do this is very desirable to all. Every person must use language, and when it is used well, there is a force and beauty given to the ideas which they otherwise would never have. Thus grammar becomes an important study to all. Without this study men will use either too many or too few words in expressing their ideas. They will use those which do not mean what they intend to say, or those which express more or not as much as they mean. They will put words in the wrong place, making their ideas obscure or unintelligible; and thus they will always employ that powerful instrument by which they act upon the minds of others, in an awkward, disagreeable, and powerless manner.

I am aware that grammar has been considered a difficult subject, especially to younger scholars. But I apprehend that most of the

difficulties have arisen rather from the manner it has been taught, than from the nature of the science. He who can bring two things together and see whether they are alike or unlike, may learn the grammar of his language, and be able to make use of what he has learned, whenever there is an occasion for speaking or writing.

I know how dry and useless scholars in our common schools have found this study. The custom is for all to study grammar, yet, as far as I have examined, I have never met with many scholars, educated in the district school, who were benefited in the least.—Nearly every pupil could repeat the grammar from beginning to end with great fluency. It was manifest that in all their study of the grammar they had exercised no other faculty than the memory. They had been taught to consider their grammar as something that was to be committed, and nothing more.

Years had been spent in doing this, and yet the scholar was just as unable to distinguish a part of speech, to apply a rule, or construct a sentence, as if he had spent the whole of that time in committing to memory words and sentences to which he could connect no meaning whatever. The scholars had spent months, and more frequently years, in parsing, but had used the dictionary to find out what part of speech the word in question was, and then *guessed* its modification and government.

If they guessed what the teacher considered as right, they went on, and nothing further was said; if the guessing was wrong, the teacher corrected them, and the only manifestation they had give of understanding why they were wrong and the teacher right, was their ability to repeat the teacher's correction, and then pass on to guess out the next word. Consequently the time which scholars devote to the study of grammar in our common schools, is spent in *committing to memory and parsing by guess*.

Now why does not committing the grammar to memory qualify the scholar for distinguishing parts of speech; for seeing their relations to each other, and for perceiving their government? Why does he not parse with some correctness, with some certainty of the truth of what he is saying? Is the grammar which he has committed, good for nothing? or has he not mental capacity sufficient to understand it? or has he been taught to understand what he has been learning, and make a practical use of it?

We believe the fault is suggested by the last question; though the books are not faultless, for the best system we have seen may be improved either in its definitions or arrangement, or its adaptation to the youthful mind; and we know, too, that some commenced the study too young, or with minds not sufficiently cultivated; but the main cause of scholars not deriving any benefit from studying grammar, is their not understanding the rules and definitions they have learned.

Scholars seldom know even the object of grammar. How can they know what application to make of it? But few teachers know how to assist the pupil in the study of grammar. The most of them do not understand it themselves, and it cannot be expected that they will give what they do not pos-

sess. I know of nothing in which our district schools are so defective as they are in the art of teaching grammar. An entire change is necessary in the system now generally adopted.

[For the Common School Assistant.]

GEOGRAPHY.

The practice of merely asking questions and receiving answers from a text book, is almost useless. I do not remember that I ever heard a question asked or a remark made except in the precise words of the book. The scholar is thought a prodigy because he can find the questions on the map about as fast as the teacher gives them out! The result of all this is, that no lasting benefit is obtained. Scarcely one-half of the schools in the country adopt any other method.

The first plan I shall mention, is drawing on paper, or the black board, which every school-house should be furnished with for this and similar purposes. I give out a lesson to the class, perhaps telling them at the first exercise to draw the larger circles without the map, and proceed in this manner from one subject to another, until they are prepared to draw the natural boundaries.—Commencing with North America, I make them draw the outlines simply, and thus pass over all the great divisions of the globe. I then request them to try the next lesson and see how many seas they can put on their new map. They immediately become interested in their performances; and thus I go on step by step till the whole map is completed. During this exercise, I occasionally throw out some historical anecdote, or request them to give a general history of some country in their own words. All these exercises are performed without the aid of maps during recitation. The advantage of this system over the usual methods is, it requires a constant review. When his examples are performed on the board one day, he is obliged to repeat his preceding lesson before he can succeed in the present. This is the very reason that so few get a thorough knowledge of the subject, so little is the attention paid to reviewing. Another advantage is, the pupil must get his lesson thorough before he can succeed in a correct delineation. He likewise has some visible object to which he may direct his attention. But in reciting after this manner, the teacher must bear in mind the motto, "One thing at a time;" being careful not to burden the pupil with too much at once, especially in advance lessons.

Another method I have used, is, after the principal terms have been explained, I question the class in the more general parts of the geography, and then give out a lesson after this manner. I speak to my class something in this way: "I want you to-morrow to tell me all the seas you can find on the map, and tell me where they are situated." When recitation comes, I find every eye fixed on me. I request all who have any lesson, to raise their hands, and then call on them singly, though promiscuously, to mention one, and proceed in this way till the whole subject is exhausted. I then take the gulfs, bays, rivers, &c. till all the natural divisions are named. I then take the artifi-

cial divisions. Two or three times a week I hold a map before them at a distance sufficiently far that they can see the divisions, but not read the names, and taking a pointer request them to tell the names. This will frequently succeed in exciting an interest. As geography is a study that requires but little mental effort, the teacher should vary the exercise now and then. As long as one course is adopted, so long will any study be dull and uninteresting to children.

It should ever be the teacher's duty to invent something new by which he may render the tasks of his pupils not only pleasant, but give a new impulse to his study.

I do not propose these plans because I think no better can be adopted, but I believe that every teacher should have several different ways to communicate instruction, not only in geography but every other branch.

A COMMON SCHOOL TEACHER.

Address delivered before the Jefferson County School Convention, at Watertown, Sept. 7th, 1835; by the Rev. B. H. Hickox.

We have been highly gratified in the perusal of this able address, which the Rev. author had the politeness to send to us in a pamphlet form. We hope a copy of this pamphlet reached every dwelling in the county. It is written by a scholar, and by one who has closely observed the condition, and felt a deep interest in the improvement of our common schools. We heartily commend the extracts we make to the notice of our readers.

"The general dissemination of knowledge is important in every country; it is pre-eminent in our own Republic.—With us, every man in the exercise of his elective franchise, should be able to give an enlightened vote. Where the government is in the hands of the people, as with us, unless that people are intelligent, it will be hurried on to ruin. Despotism governments in which the people are allowed no voice, can alone wish to deepen the gloom of popular ignorance. It is the interest and safety of ours, to enlighten and to elevate.—With us every man has a measure of influence—a voice in his rulers. His vote tells on the political canvass. The safety of the nation therefore requires, that virtue and intelligence control and guide him in its disposition."

"The district school-houses that meet us at almost every corner, may be considered as so many nurseries of wholesome aliment for the nourishment of the body corporate; or as so many channels through which intelligence is conveyed into every vein of the republic. It is a system that regards the circulation and health of the whole body. It would dispel every cloud of mental gloom by lighting up the tapers of science on all the hills and in all the valleys of our land. It aims to give light and intelligence in an even ratio, to the whole people. And we flatter ourselves that the axiom will be conceded, that this intelligence must be guided and controlled by moral principle. Knowledge is a power that is safe no further than

it is under the control of such an influence. The sanctions of moral principle should therefore be felt as widely as intelligence is disseminated."

After the author very justly shews the necessity of religious instruction, he then observes:

"With these preliminary remarks, we would suggest,

1st. That the teachers in our common schools should be men of sufficient intelligence, and such a standard of moral integrity as will peculiarly fit them for their stations as guardians of our youth, and the conservators of the public morals.

The district school should teach science. It should also teach truth and honesty. It stands in an interesting relation to the whole community. It takes our children from the nursery, and trains them for action on the theatre of life. On the nature of that training much depends. Scientific embellishments serve only to degrade him who is wanting in truth and honesty. This is a subject into which the guardians of education must look with more care. It is but a blight to improve the intellect, if we ruin the morals. It is putting power into dangerous hands. It is arming vice. It is the erection of an engine for the destruction of our free institutions. Let us therefore give more attention to the morals of the pupils in our common schools. These are frequently places of rudeness and vulgarity. Parents often dread their moral influence on the character of their children, and cases are not rare, where they have refused to patronize them on this account. Depend upon it, there is a radical defect in discipline that threatens ruin to the whole system. It is our duty to resolve, as parents and guardians and trustees of the public morals, to carry reform into these nurseries of science, and to make them neat and orderly and moral and decorous. If the presence of the teacher in or about the premises be necessary to effect this, let that be one of the conditions of his employment. The rude and even riotous conduct of the inmates of these primary schools, is not only ruinous to their manners and morals, and destructive of the very object of the institution, but ruinous also to books and desks and clothing, an alarming amount of which is destroyed annually that might otherwise be saved. Demolished seats and scribbled walls, and broken windows and doors is the scene of ruin that arrests the attention, when we approach and enter the district school house. Every thing bespeaks the necessity of reform. We do insist that there is no necessity for this state of things."

"2d. We must awaken a deep interest in behalf of common schools among the leading and influential men of the several districts. These little nurseries of science must be made the idols of the neighborhood. Leading men must foster and control them; act as their trustees; advise with the teacher; visit the school; witness the performances of the pupils; be the friend and patron of the instructor; and form his council of advice in discipline and government. This will elevate the character of our primary schools, and make the avocation of the tea-

cher more responsible and more respectable. Burdensome on the time of some of our most industrious citizens it may be, but it is a burden "pro bono publico," that they must consent to bear."

In the next extract the author gives the reason of our school system not working as well as it might.

"The system is already organized and carried into operation. It does not work to the satisfaction of its benevolent projectors. The secret of much of the difficulty lies in the fact, that the people for whose benefit it was devised, have been exceedingly deficient in their efforts to make it successful. Who are the trustees and visitors and patrons of these schools? In many districts it would be difficult to tell. Now here is a field for the philanthropist and the patriot that calls for benevolent effort. Let every friend of science, of morals, and of his country see to it that he is doing his duty, in his own neighborhood, touching these necessary things."

The following shows the necessity of intelligence:

"The day has gone by, when ignorance can be respected. Men must be intelligent. The time has arrived when no citizen can come into society without being scientifically weighed. Right or wrong, the fact is notorious, and this ordeal is every day necessarily growing more severe. Such are our means of information, and such is the expectation of the public mind, that ignorance finds no apology. The entire mass of the respectable portion of our population, that are now growing up around us must have a knowledge of common arithmetic, the grammar of our language, of geography in connexion with astronomy and history. He who falls below this, falls into the lowest walks of life, to be known as the ignorant and illiterate."

We respectfully and particularly call the attention of such of our readers who think cheapness the best qualification in a common school teacher, to the next extract.

"It costs as much in wood and books and desks to support a cheap school as a dear one. The only item of difference is the difference in the wages of the teachers. Compared with the solid advantages to be derived from the employment of a competent instructor, this is not worthy the consideration of the intelligent freemen and independent yeomanry of our country. If economy must be studied—and it is the last place we should study economy—we should be the gainers by diminishing the time, rather than by lowering down the qualifications of the teacher. Give us a good school for eight months, in preference to a poor one for twelve. Every circumstance combines to demand at our hands competent teachers.—Parents, guardians, patriots! Ye conservators of the free institutions bequeathed to us by our ancestors, give this truth its due weight, and sustain with a liberality worthy of you, our schools for primary education."

Again the author says,

"If the supporters and patrons of our district schools disregard all we have; if idlers

if they approve it, without improving by it; if they still neglect to foster and visit these nurseries of science, then is our labor vain, and our efforts fall to the ground. Then, farmers and mechanics, let me tell you, will an aristocracy grow up in our land that will throw your children in the background, and the sons of rich men from our academies and colleges will fill all our places of trust and honor and profit! Knowledge is power; and when intelligence shall be confined to the rich of our country—(let the day never come)—then shall we have a monopoly dangerous indeed! The remedy is the elevation of our common schools. The application of this remedy is with you."

The last extract we make from this well-conceived, useful address is timely expressed.

"I would suggest the expediency of recommending an adoption of the law by the several districts that authorizes them to tax, by their own vote, the inhabitants twenty dollars for the purchase of a small library, to be kept by the teacher or any other person, for the use of the district. An additional sum may be raised in the same way for the purchase of a book-case, and the foundation of a library will be commenced always accessible to the inhabitants of the neighborhood, and this little storehouse of science will benefit each individual as much or nearly so as if the whole stock were his individual property, while it cost him the sum of one or two dollars. By such a recommendation from us, the districts will be prepared to act in this matter, and will better understand the use and value of this law. It was passed, I believe, at the last session of our legislature, and may be unknown to many districts in our country. If it is worthy of their adoption, it is worthy of your recommendation."

COMMON SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The utility of common school libraries, in promoting the best interests of society, is manifest to every man who knows the advantages of acquired knowledge. But as a portion of the community are hardly supposed to appreciate this advantage, it is doubtful whether the law which provides for the establishment of these libraries will not remain, to a great extent, a dead letter.—Those who cannot read, or do not read, must be incompetent judges of the pleasures and advantages which books afford. Where libraries have been established they promise the happiest effects, in inducing a taste for reading, not only among the children of the schools, but among their parents, and consequently are converting to usefulness much time which was wont to be spent in idleness, if not in vice. If then these libraries are calculated to benefit the children which have access to them, and to increase the measure of public knowledge, virtue, and happiness, why not make their provision mandatory? There are a great many people in the community who would not, if the matter was left to their option, expend their money in repairing the public roads, or in maintaining common schools at all; yet the law compels them to do it, because the public good requires it. And would not the pub-

lic good be subverted, also, by the intellectual and moral culture of the rising generation, who are soon to be the masters of the land?

We have noticed, in our late readings, two instances where men who became distinguished for literary acquirements, dated the commencement for reading, and the acquisition of knowledge, to the accidental perusal of Robinson Crusoe. Cobbett, who wrote more, perhaps, than any man now living, and who is *not*, on the score of talents, compared to Pitt by some of the British reviewers, ascribed a like influence to his early perusal of the Tale of the Tub. The predominant passion of youth is curiosity. If we can blend useful knowledge with the gratification of this predominating passion, we bend the twig as the tree should grow—we plant seeds which, like the acorn, may spring up and spread branches far and wide, to refresh and beautify the land. The nursery and the school are particularly adapted to this species of training. If the habit of reading is postponed to manhood, or is only enforced as a task, the mind either does not imbibe a relish for it, or rejects it with disgust. But if the habit is acquired in youth, as it generally will be where opportunity is offered of acquiring it voluntarily, it becomes a companion in manhood, and a solace in old age. At present the opportunities for reading, to the young, are extremely limited in most parts of our state. There are few social libraries, and very few bookstores, except in the cities and villages. The meagre supply of other than school books and bibles, which reaches the interior, principally passes through chapmen and peddlers, and are of doubtful character. It certainly becomes the guardians of the public weal to take these matters under their special cognizance, and to see that the young mind is furnished with food adapted to its capacities, and calculated to promote its health and usefulness.—*Cultivator*.

LENDING LIBRARIES.

"There are in England and Wales 2,464 lending libraries."—*London Jour. of Ed.*

These "Lending Libraries" were introduced some years since, principally through the efforts and recommendation of Lord Brougham. The "London School Society" says, "they have been productive of the greatest good; they have not only excited and improved the schools, but they have given a taste for reading throughout the community generally." A "Lending Library" is read by the inhabitants of one place, and then taken to another neighborhood, where it is re-read, and then again sent to some other circle of readers. Although this system has the advantage of presenting frequently a new class of books to the people, I do not think it as good as the system of stationary libraries. When a district has purchased a library, it will be more disposed to read and preserve the books, from the fact that the individuals paid their money for them. The responsibility, too, will be local, and in most cases individual; and the people of the district will have a desire to improve and increase what they perceive to be their own property and index of character.

From the Friendly Visitant

MATERNAL INSTRUCTION.

Intelligence and piety are essential to sustaining our public institutions, both civil and religious. Every practicable means ought to be brought into operation in order to promote these accomplishments. The most essential of these, we must admit, is piety. This virtue is very dependent on maternal instruction and influence. In proportion as young mothers become pious and skilful, our nation will become elevated in its character, and our excellent government made secure. Some improved plans for elevating character have been successfully brought into operation of latter time. The influence of education on low and dissipated families, by means of a course of education practiced in our charitable institutions, has been very extraordinary.

De Witt Clinton, when governor of the state of New-York, in his message to the legislature stated, "that amongst the thousands who had been educated at these schools, it had been very rare that any one of them had ever been convicted in after time of a crime."

Although improvements have been made in the important business of education, yet much more remains to be done. In many instances, where private families have not had access to a good school, parents have been very successful in teaching their children themselves, and occasionally employing a family tutor to aid them. It is well known to the writer of this, that a little girl of five years old was the past winter advanced from spelling in words of three letters, to reading understandingly in easy parts of the bible, in two months. Something like half an hour was daily spent by some of the family in teaching her.

Children of slow parts have been known to progress rapidly, by applying instruction in such a manner as to invite and draw out their latent faculties. Those who are well taught at home, make good scholars when they get an opportunity to attend school.—A periodical to impart information of the late improvements in education, with successful examples, as well as to furnish suitable reading for children, will probably be acceptable to the readers of this tract.

The benefits contemplated, however, will depend essentially on the co-operation of parents in carrying the design of the publication into effect. Should they be as much engaged to improve their own children, and to make it their study to qualify themselves for it, as the teachers of schools often are to make themselves useful to children, important and unlooked-for improvements will doubtless be made.

Dr. Henderson, in his work on Iceland, states, "that though there is but one school on the Island, he scarcely ever entered a hut where he did not find individuals capable of talking on topics altogether above the understanding of people of the same cast in other countries of Europe." The same may be said of particular families in our own country.

H. P. D.

EDUCATION CONVENTION.

A convention called at the instance of the College of Teachers, was assembled

at Columbus, on the 13th inst., to promote the cause of *public instruction*. In consequence of the shortness of the notice, and the almost impassable state of the roads, but few regular delegates attended; yet the meeting was composed of zealous and efficient men, and the result will, I believe, be of momentous consequence to the future condition of education in Ohio.—Among the members in attendance I noticed Professor M'Guffy of Oxford, Sparrow of Kenyon, Jewett of Marietta, Stowe of Lane Seminary, Governor Lucas, and several other gentlemen known as the enlightened and disinterested friends of popular education. The meeting was organized by the appointment of Governor Lucas, president, the Rev. Dr. Hoge, vice-president, and M. G. Williams secretary. The meetings of the convention were held in Dr. Hoge's church, twice a day during three days. The result of the convention was the formation of a state society for the promotion of public instruction, auxiliary to the Western College of Teachers, and the adoption of a memorial on the subject of common schools—proposing some essential amendments to the system now in operation. Among these are the establishment of a department of instruction, with a general head; the establishment of school district libraries; the higher qualifications of teachers; and the greater responsibility of the examiners.

Professor Stowe delivered two very clear and interesting lectures on the Prussian system of public instruction, and the modifications necessary to adapt it to this country. Many members of the legislature were in attendance, and it is believed that a very general disposition to improve and elevate the system of public instruction prevailed. The *real difficulty* is to discover and carry out the *best system*. The people are by no means awake to the great defects of the existing laws and the wretched practice under them.—*Cincinnati Journal*.

NEW TESTAMENT.

The superintendent of our district schools reports, that out of our eight hundred and forty-two towns the New Testament is used in but one hundred and twenty-four of them, leaving seven hundred and eighteen towns, embracing nearly or quite half a million of scholars, where the scriptures are not taught. And in the towns where they are taught, most of the schools will doubtless be found destitute. We shall scarcely find such a neglect in any other Christian country.—Shall we allow our fears of a union of church and state thus to limit the redeeming influence of the Holy Scriptures.—*Skaneateles Columbian*.

AN EDITOR'S EXPRESSION.

The editor of the Evansville Journal, Indiana, after noticing this paper, makes an excellent suggestion. It is seen in the following extract:

"The Common School Assistant is published monthly; and five dollars will procure twenty copies for one year. Any person who will leave his name and 25 cents with us shall have a copy for one year; but are there not many gentlemen who feel a

sufficient interest in the cause of education to give fifty cents or a dollar, and let every family in the county be supplied with a copy? If all the editors in our state would take an interest in the circulation of this work, a wonderful change might be wrought in the character and usefulness of common schools, and in public opinion with regard to their importance.

Of the only three persons with whom we have conversed, two have voluntarily offered a dollar each; one has given fifty cents."

Common Schools in Massachusetts.

According to the late report of the secretary of state to the Massachusetts Legislature, returns in relation to common schools have been received from 277 towns in the commonwealth, though the returns from 56 of these were not received within the time prescribed by law. From 30 towns there was no report at all.

In the 277 towns reported there were 2,397 school districts. The number of male children in attendance, between the ages of four any sixteen, was 73,254; female children, 68,323: total, males and females, 142,077.

There were 2,088 male and 2,548 female instructors; the amount raised by tax for the support of schools was \$49,859.89; and \$3,862.23 were raised by contributions for the same purpose. The average number of scholars attending academies and private schools was 24,278; and the estimated amount paid for their tuition \$209,194.07. Of the above towns 78 are in possession of local funds applicable to purposes of education; of the others, 191 have no such funds; and, by right, no returns respecting this fact were made.—*Sunday School Journal*.

SCHOOL SYSTEM OF MICHIGAN.

The constitution declares that the legislature shall provide a system of common schools, by which a school shall be kept up and supported in each school district at least three months in every year; and it also provides for the appointment of a superintendent of public instruction, whose duty it shall be to direct and superintend said schools.—Our school fund will be ample for all our purposes, if the lands are properly managed, and I would direct your immediate attention to that branch of the subject. Under the direction of the government, section sixteen in each township is reserved for schools, and under the act of Jan. 20, 1826, seventy-two sections of land are reserved for the use and support of the University of Michigan.—*Governor's Message*.

LADY NOEL BYRON.

The editor of the American Annals of Education has found at the town of Ealing, in England, a school which has lately gone into operation on the plan of the celebrated institution at Hotwyl, in Switzerland. It was formed by lady Noel Byron, for the benefit of the children of the working classes, and had at the time of the visit fifteen boarders and sixty day scholars. The pupils spend a part of every day in farming or other manual labor, and are fitted to become village teachers, intelligent mechanics, or for other useful situations in life. The charge for day

scholars is two pence per week, and for boarders about \$62 yearly. The Bible is regularly and practically studied.

VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE.

Children cannot see the necessity, or the advantages, or the pleasures of knowledge; and what incentives have they to make its acquisition? Now it is necessary that the teacher should supply, to some extent, what their ignorance shuts out. He should show them the power that knowledge has given to the human race—the liberty that it has given to nations—the glory and dignity with which it has invested the human mind—the comforts, conveniences, and pleasures it has conferred on society, and the respect and influence it gives to individuals.

A perception (even if it should be a faint one) of some of these grand results will give them a foretaste and a determination which will ensure high attainments. It will make his scholars regard the means of cultivating the mind their highest privilege and their greatest blessing. Teachers, then, should not only *possess* and be qualified to *impart* knowledge to their pupils, but they should be able to make them *feel its value*.

The common Council of Boston have appropriated \$500 to the purchase of a suitable philosophical apparatus for each of the public grammar schools for girls in that city.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.

Mr. D. B. CADY, of Sullivan, Madison co. has resolved to supply each school district in his town with a volume of the "District School," and a copy of the "Common School Assistant." He has forwarded to us his order and the payment for the two works. Mr. C., we think, has set a good example for the philanthropists of every town in the state.

G. H. CHABOT, jr. is the agent of this paper in Baltimore. Subscriptions received by him at the office of the "American."

We acknowledge the receipt of monies where there are twenty subscribers or more, in payment for the "Common School Assistant," as indicated below, up to the first of March. To mention those under twenty, would make the list too long to print.

Albany city and co.	190	Northampton, Mass.	120
Brock's Bridge, Mont.	20	New-York City,	600
Baltimore, Md.	40	North Pownal, Me.	20
Black Rock, Erie co.	20	New-Bloomfield, Pa.	20
Cleveland, Oswego,	30	Nicholasville, Ky.	20
Clinton, Oneida,	40	Pottsville, Pa.	20
Elmira, Tioga,	30	Perry, Gene.	20
Franklin, N. C.	30	Peterboro, Md.	20
Groton, Conn.	20	Philadelphia, Pa.	315
Hoosack Falls, Rens.	25	Perth Amboy, N. J.	20
Hanover, Chaut.	20	Patchogue, L. I.	20
Havana, Tioga,	25	Reading, Pa.	20
Lyons, Wayne,	20	Rodman, Jeff.	20
Meredith, Del. co.	20	Rochester, Monroe,	20
Macedon, Cen. Wayn	20	Sand Lake, Rens.	20
Mt. Holly, N. J.	20	Tecumseh, Mich.	20
Medina, Orleans,	20	Urbana, Gene.	20
N. W. Creek, Wash.	40	Warsaw, Gene.	20
N. Y. Mills, Oneida,	20	Willink, Erie,	20

The CULTIVATOR, a monthly publication of 16 quarto pages each, conducted by J. BUEL, and devoted exclusively to agriculture and the improvement of young men, is forwarded to subscribers from this office, at fifty cents per annum, paid in advance.

Power-Press of Hoffman & White.